



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: A trapper, starving and snow-bound, sat in his Arctic cabin with his faithful dog. Each day, as his hunger increased, the dog at his side looked more appetizing. But he could not betray the trusting, adoring eyes that were fixed on him.

Finally in desperation, he took his knife and cut off the dog's tail. He shut his ears to the howls as he made a nourishing soup.

But, before he took the first spoonful, he saw the dog beside him, with those trusting adoring eyes. He gave the skin off the severed tail back to the dog, and they both enjoyed their skimpy meal together.

The hunter's heart never missed a beat as his dog licked his hand in gratitude! – Jeremy Lee, May 2006

IS THERE AN ELECTION IN THE WIND? Jeremy Lee – a-HASCO report: A government raised the level of taxation to the highest point in the nation's history. Finally, it had billions of dollars in surplus, far more than it planned on spending. Did it hand this excess taxation back to the people?

It decided it could spend the money more wisely than the people it had taxed. But it saw the adoring, trusting eyes of the taxpayers. So it handed back just enough to ensure it won the next election!

A cynic might suspect the latest federal budget as being designed for an election. There are too many chickens coming home to roost for the Howard government to delay much longer. The report from the Cole inquiry into the Wheat Board scandal is due at the end of June. Polls show that 70% of Australians believe the government knew about the kick-backs to Saddam Hussein. Even a watered down Cole report will not leave the Howard ministry unscathed.

The overwhelming opposition to the Iraq war, which is engulfing President Bush and British PM Tony Blair, will inevitably catch up with John Howard. Better to be out of the way when it happens.

The plans to complete the sale of Telstra and then sell the Snowy Mountain Authority sticks in the craw of a big majority of Australians, according to the polls. If the government moves on to sell Australia Post it'll be on for one and all!

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The Industrial Relations legislation is unpopular, and is already swinging voters away from the Coalition. The swing will grow as more and more cases of discrimination surface.

A quick election after a massive Santa Claus budget makes a lot of sense, before all the stumbling blocks become too obvious, and while there's still no Opposition to speak of.

Course, we *could* be wrong

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE BUDGET? by **Jeremy Lee:** The English language was once a reasonably precise way to convey meaning. Not any more. It is now twisted – by 'spin' – to mean exactly the opposite of reality. The latest media reports of the latest budget are designed to deceive.

The headline in *The Australian Financial Review* (10/5/06) in its special budget lift-out, read "SUPER-SIZE TAX CUTS". The headline in *The Australian* (10/5/06) read "MANNA FROM HEAVEN".

We were told 2,000 years ago that no man could serve two masters. It was either God or mammon. Should the headline have read 'Mammon From Heaven'? At any rate I eagerly opened the pages to confirm the tax-cut of \$43 billion. I remain utterly mystified!

The government figures show that total tax receipts in the year ending will be \$208 billion. Estimates for 2006-07 will be \$217 billion (an increase of \$9 billion, or approx. \$400 for every Australian.

Both income taxes and indirect taxes, which make up the total, have increased from \$222 billion in 2005-06 to 231 billion for 2006-07. Of course, there was NO mention of the GST, which is imposed under Commonwealth law, but for convenience sake is called a 'State' tax. **Some manna! Some heaven!**

PARTIES, ELECTIONS AND PIE-CRUST PROMISES: When HASCO started its voluntary monthly polls some three years ago, we had no idea of the response we'd get. Our first poll concentrated on what ordinary voters thought about their members of parliament.

The response was startling! We knew politicians were not wildly popular. But we had no idea how hostile and contemptuous the big majority of people really felt. They didn't believe election promises. They felt they were never asked what they wanted. They felt Australia's democratic system was not working properly. The people felt totally ignored between elections, and were then propagandized and bribed.

We noticed another thing. Although the community was split into hostile groups when it came to elections, most, when asked their views on policies, shared much the same opinions. The divisions between ordinary men and women in the streets were largely artificially created.

The idea of running Peoples' Polls was started to counter these artificial divisions, and to start an alternative much more in keeping with democracy – actively informing individual members of parliament what the people wanted, sooner than passively being told by politicians what they could and could not have.

It's an old idea which now seems new to many, who have never been asked their opinions before. To begin with, some were suspicious. But, as continue month by month, many are catching on, and feel we should have more of it!

If we had a polling team in every electorate, co-ordinating their efforts and getting more coverage for results, politicians would have to take more notice of what their voters wanted.

There's not much personal glory in volunteering to run a poll. It costs a day every month. There's no pay. There's occasional abuse. But there's also growing appreciation of a valuable service to fellow Australians.

YES, YOU ARE WORRIED NOW! by James Reed: The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee wants the Federal government to abandon its new sedition laws, which it fears may threaten "academic freedom". (The Australian, 3/5/06, p.23) The government will be giving academic conferences, seminars' papers and design drawings greater scrutiny in the never-ending "war on terrorism". Thus sedition includes the offence of urging a person to overthrow the constitution. The professors in their submission say that asking students questions about "the desirability of a republican constitution ... must, in the course of discussion, cast aspersions on the present constitution." They went on to say: "Should discussion among students become heated, as occasionally happens, and comments are reported outside, would it be open for parents of students, say, to report such teaching as treasonable and seditious?"

Treasonable and seditious teaching in the arts and social sciences has been part of intellectual life in Australia for at least the last fifty years. As much as I disagree with sedition laws, if some of our betrayers of our young people go down with their ship, then these laws may have some positive benefits – alongside of course their overriding negatives.

IS THIS WHAT JOHN HOWARD HAS IN MIND WITH HIS 'SMART CARD'? It would seem the United Kingdom is much further down the Orwellian path than is Australia.

Did you know? re: ID Cards UK – 18/4/06.

"You may have heard that legislation creating compulsory ID Cards passed a crucial stage in the House of Commons. You may feel that ID cards are not something to worry about, since we already have Photo ID for our Passport and Driving License and an ID Card will be no different to that.

What you have not been told is the full scope of this proposed ID Card, and what it will mean to you personally. **National Identity Register:**

The proposed ID Card will be different from any card you now hold. It will be connected to a database called the NIR, (National Identity Register) where all of your personal details will be stored. This will include the unique number that will be issued to you, your fingerprints, a scan of the back of your eye, and your photograph. Your name, address and date of birth will also obviously be stored there.

There will be spaces on this database for your religion, residence status, and many other private and personal facts about you. There is unlimited space for every other details of your life on the NIR database, which can be expanded by the Government with or without further Acts of Parliament.

By itself, you might think that this register is harmless, but you would be wrong to come to this conclusion. This new card will be used to check your identity against your entry in the register in real time, whenever you present it to 'prove who you are'.

Every place that sells alcohol or cigarettes, every post office, every pharmacy, and every Bank will have an NIR Card Terminal, (very much like the Chip and Pin Readers that are everywhere now) into which your card can be 'swiped' to check your identity. Each time this happens, a record is made at the NIR of the time and place that the Card was presented. This means for example, that there will be a government record of every time you withdraw more than £99 at your branch of Nat West, **who now demand ID for these transactions.** Every time you have to prove that you are over 18, your card will be swiped, and a record made at the NIR. Restaurants and off licenses will demand that your card is swiped so that each receipt shows that they sold alcohol to someone over 18, and that this was proved by the access to the NIR, indemnifying them from prosecution.

Private businesses are going to be given access to the NIR Database. If you want to apply for a job, you will have to present your card for a swipe. If you want to apply for a London Underground Oyster Card, or a supermarket loyalty card, or a driving license you will have to present your ID Card

for a swipe. The same goes for getting a telephone line or a mobile phone or an internet account.

Oyster, DVLA, BT and Nectar (for example) all run very detailed databases of their own. They will be allowed access to the NIR, just as every other business will be. This means that each of these entities will be able to store your unique number in their database, and place all your travel, phone records, driving activities and detailed shopping habits under your unique NIR number. These databases, which can easily fit on a storage device the size of your hand, will be sold to third parties either legally or illegally. It will then be possible for a non governmental entity to create a detailed dossier of all your activities. Certainly, the government will have clandestine access to all of them, meaning that they will have a complete record of all your movements, from how much and when you withdraw from your bank account to what medications you are taking, down to the level of what sort of bread you eat – all accessible via a single unique number in a central database.

This is quite a significant leap from a simple ID Card that shows your name and face.

Most people do not know that this is the true character and scope of the proposed ID Card. Whenever the details of how it will work are explained to them, they quickly change from being ambivalent towards it.

The Government is going to COMPEL you to enter your details into the NIR and to carry this card. If you and your children want to obtain or renew your passports, you will be forced to have your fingerprints taken and your eyes scanned for the NIR, and an ID Card will be issued to you whether you want one or not. If you refuse to be fingerprinted and eye scanned, you will not be able to get a passport. Your ID Card will, just like your passport, not be your property. The Home Secretary will have the right to revoke or suspend your ID at any time, meaning that you will not be able to withdraw money from your Bank Account, for example, or do anything that requires you to present your government issued ID Card.

The arguments that have been put forward to the British voter in favour of ID Cards can be easily disproved.

- ID Cards WILL NOT stop terrorists; **every Spaniard has a compulsory ID Card as did the Madrid Bombers.**
- ID Cards will not 'eliminate benefit fraud', which in comparison, is small compared to the astronomical cost of this proposal, which will be measured in billions according to the LSE (London School of Economics).
- This scheme exists solely to exert total surveillance and control over the ordinary free British Citizen, and it will line the pockets of the companies that will create the computer systems at the expense of your freedom, privacy and money.

If you did not know the full scope of the proposed ID Card Scheme before and you are as unsettled as I am at what it really means to you, to this country and its way of life, I urge you to email or photocopy this and give it to your friends and colleagues and everyone else you think should know and who cares.

The Bill has proceeded to this stage due to the lack of accurate and complete information on this proposal being made public. Together and hand to hand, we can inform the entire nation if everyone who receives this passes it on."